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The Indian Girl Who Led Them

SACAJAWEA

By
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THE INDIAN GIRL WHO LED THEM.

"Some day upon the Bozeman Pass, Sacajawea's statue will stand beside that of Clark. Some day, where the rivers part, her laurels will vie with those of Lewis. Across North America a Shoshone Indian princess touched hands with Jefferson, opening her country," writes Eva Emery Dye, in "The Conquest."

It is for the aid she gave the historic enterprise that we remember Sacajawea. To our fancy she most often appears as a patient squaw, boldly leading the Lewis and Clark party through a maze of mountains and snow fields; but the months of 1804-5 spent in the service of the expedition were but a brief period of a life romantically set and eventful, though dreary alike with an Indian woman's doom of labor and with hopeless ambitions.

Lewis and Clark wrote down the main facts of her history. Knowledge of her environment and such clues as have been gained from searches among old records eke out the material needful for a story of her life.

AUERBACH COLL. December 1947

CHAPTER I.

She was born more than a hundred years ago, and amidst beautiful surroundings, although in a lodge

made of brush-wood and skins. Here, however, she was not kept much of the time, but out-of-doors even in weather which we would consider too cold for a baby ever so carefully muffled.

That song of infancy:

> Bye-a-baby Bunting,
> Papa's gone a-hunting,
> To get a little rabbit-skin
> To wrap the baby Bunting in,

might well have been composed with special reference to her, for in cold weather she wore a single garment made from skins of rabbits which her father had shot, though probably from the wigwam door.

Now there were Indians who braided cradles for their babies out of fragrant grasses and lined them with down from the breasts of birds, much as the oriole builds its nest. But her parents were Shoshones, and the Shoshone Indians were not deft with their fingers; so it is likely she had nothing better than such a board as an Indian could make, cut to fit her length, with a narrow piece of wood set edgewise against one end for a foot-rest, and a broader piece that would afford some protection from heat and cold set across the other end. However, we know that in after life she always seemed more fortunate in many ways than other Indians, and never did she cease trying to learn new ways. Perhaps she got this trait from her mother, and perhaps her mother had seen one of these oriole-like nests and then experimented with grasses and down from the breasts

of birds, until she really had one for her own little black-eyed, brown-skinned baby.

But whether cuddled in one of them or bound to the board, which had been made as comfortable as possible with skins, or with furs if the weather was cold, she sometimes spent very pleasant hours. And her pleasantest times were not when being carried from place to place upon her mother's back; still less were they when in some treeless region there was no better place for the bed with herself in it than standing on end against a rock; but they were when, among the willows that fringed some stream one was found to which the baby and the bed might be hung with safety. There, lulled by the gentle moving up and down of the springy bough, she slept, sucked her thumb, listened to the music of the stream, watched the clouds sail through the blue and the prettiness of the greenery just overhead.

Perhaps they called her Bird-child, for we know that in after years she bore the name of Bird-woman.

CHAPTER II.

She grew rapidly into a hardy, healthy childhood. Then she had a playmate whose name has not come down to us, but whom it will do no harm to call Prairie-flower. Bird-child and Prairie-flower had many pleasures such as no white child, however fortunate, would scorn.

To begin with, there were the wild flowers; the bitter-root blossoms that, mingling their soft pink with the green of the grass, made a more beautiful carpet for the hillside than ever the palace of a king held; the shooting-stars, tip-tilting on their long slender stems either singly or in clusters, flame-colored or pink, according to locality, but always, as if tired after the fall from the sky, bending their rays backward; yellow-bells, which bloomed first of all the flowers, were found in the shelter of rocks, wild-peas covered the prairie; roses and cactus abounded; and here and there in flat and marshy places blossomed wonderful lilies, flat and round and fragrant, wearing a faint pink blush.

Then, too, there were good things to eat. Service berries, strawberries and huckleberries ripened for the benefit of Bird-child and Prairie-flower; gooseberries, in green, thorny thickets, abounded; the prickly-pear cactus bore its small fruit; wild onions were to be had for the pulling; spruce trees furnished them with chewing-gum, and pine trees gave them delicious nuts.

The little girls had ponies upon which they roamed far away from the wigwams with never a thought of getting lost. And these ponies were not always gentle, that is to say, quiet. Even while being ridden by the little girls they would prance and whirl and stand erect, now pawing the air, now kicking wildly, or in a mood of playfulness gamboling until even Bird-child and Prairie-flower had hard work to hold on.

Besides their childish wanderings, they roved with their tribe throughout the mountains, camping in the valleys and threading the defiles. Often a stopping-place was chosen near a river, so the girls had a chance to swim. And such swimmers as they were! The fishes themselves could do no better. Few currents were too swift or too cold for them. They could stay in all day if they chose without fear of getting sick, for they were healthy, hardy children. Scrambling to the top of some rock, they would dive and then slip along under the water, making it seem as if they had been drowned, but suddenly they would bob up in the middle of the stream, far away from each other as likely as not. Then they would sport as other children sport only when safe and sound on land.

Or they would often play at being grown-up. In some pleasant willow grove, the small trees would be bent downward from the top and woven into little bowers. Or if real little wigwams were desired, they could be made of tiny skins kept for the purpose, and the brush-wood at hand. In these, fires could be built by heaping dry twigs in the center just under the opening that had been left for the escape of smoke. Then the little girls would toast the bits of venison they coaxed from their mothers, pinning them to sharp-pointed sticks and holding them before the blaze; for in this way they saw their mothers cook venison.

Boys would set forth from this play camp upon a mimic chase and to mimic battle. And a favorite pleasure of boys and girls alike was to move camp.

Down would come the little wigwams, to be laden on miniature travois. Boys armed with toy bows and quivers, girls who with baby brothers and sisters peering from over their shoulders were little mothers for the time being; ponies and dogs—all would move in a tatterdemalion procession from one willow grove to another.

The leafy summer was the Indian's happiest time. Then the skin wigwams were likely to be deserted for willow lodges which in turn were tired of, when the whole tribe would live in the open air and under the open sky. So at meal times or during cool evenings the light of family fires would glow upon the prairie.

There had been much intermarrying in the tribes and relationships were traced carefully; so the children felt at home in any camp. Bird-child and Prairie-flower would skip from fire to fire, always sure of a welcome. They played games and ran races until their eyes were brighter than ever and until their cheeks were tinged with carmine. And when the lonesome time came, after the sun had gone, and owls were abroad with their hootings, they would stay close to the grown people and listen to the telling of stories until sleep made their eyelids heavy.

They were pretty children, with their bronze skin, their regular features and their grace as natural as that of fawns.

They had clothes that were pretty, too, after a fashion; for their deer-skin frocks were trimmed with feathers, fringe, porcupine quills, and beads made of

bones; while their rabbit-skin capes had collars of full-length otter skins, heads and tails included. Bird-child and Prairie-flower wore snow-white ermine as trimming, and they might have had this rich fur made into caps had they not preferred to go bare-headed with their long black hair streaming loose. The Indian mothers even knew the secret of making the ermine seem whiter still by sewing black tails against it. Like every other little girl of the tribe they had each a necklace which looked like ivory, although it was made of teeth. Such a necklace only children wore, women preferring shell ear-rings.

But with all this, they were not satisfied, but spent long hours making themselves still gayer with feathers, twisted grass, and rose berries; the red rose berries, which they strung into necklaces, being especially becoming to them.

They would tire themselves out boring and polishing away at bits of bone and teeth of animals which they wanted for ornament, although it is not likely they were very successful at the boring, which was hard and tedious work even for grown Indians, as they had nothing better to work with than the sharp point of a stone.

Out of the great pride she had in her husband, father or brother, the Indian woman did not care to see him any less gloriously engaged than in the hunt or battle, and so took upon herself the drudgery of the camp life, and was helped in it by her daughters. Thus a part of each long summer day they carried

fuel in their strong little arms, scraped skins and worked in other ways.

From such a beginning grew the patience, loyalty and industry that were Sacajawea's in after years.

But all this tells of the happy seasons of plenty.

Bird-child and Prairie-flower knew misery as well as happiness; for they shared the bitter distresses of their people, a small tribe, of the Shoshone Nation. This tribe had once lived in the midst of plenty, roaming the Snake River valley and its adjacent country and plains of the Upper Missouri as well; but they had been driven into the mountains by enemies who now held the rich hunting-grounds. These poor Shoshones stole down several times a year, but at peril of their lives and without hope of bearing away buffalo meat and robes enough to keep them from hunger and cold during the winter; nor were they always able to eke out the supply by saving from what the mountains gave them during the summer in the way of food and covering. So they suffered almost to the point of freezing and starving to death.

CHAPTER III.

Yet no sooner would Spring unlock the streams that held the fish, and stop the other cruelties of King Winter than Bird-child and Prairie-flower were happy again.

The wonder is they could forget all they had suffered, so quickly, the more so since there was always

the danger of being pounced down upon by the terrible Sioux, or by other tribes only a little less to be dreaded.

However, as the summers slipped away, Bird-child had a trouble which no one shared with her except Prairie-flower, who gave her sympathy. She dreaded lest her father should sell her to be the wife of a certain Indian much older than herself, whom she disliked. He would not marry her immediately, of course, for she was only eleven; but he would buy her now if he could, and marry her as soon as she wore shell earrings.

She knew that the bargaining had commenced, because she could see the ponies that he tied just outside her father's lodge, the ponies he offered to give for her. She dreaded lest her father would untie them and turn them with his own band, which would mean that he had sold her.

How she hoped the hated Indian would come to think her too expensive for him and take away his ponies, which would mean he had given her up; but instead of this, he added to the number day by day.

Whenever the two girls were off alone they would make fun of the poor Indian, perhaps as he stopped his own horse and stared at them from afar. Bird-child may have found some little relief in so doing, but it was very short-lived and left her as miserable as before.

Finally, what she dreaded did happen. When there were about thirty horses in front of her father's lodge

he deigned to accept them, driving them among his own. He had sold his daughter.

But she was never to be the wife of the Indian who had bought her.

About this time one of those dreadful surprises of which the Shoshones were always in fear, yet for which they were never ready, befell in the form of a Minnetaree raid.

Bird-child and Prairie-flower, off upon their ponies as usual, saw what they had often seen before—an Indian looking down upon the valley from a hilltop, but with this difference: where before they had seldom been able to make out whether or not they knew him, now they saw he was a stranger, even in the distance, the air being clearer than usual. They could even see that he had on war ornaments and carried a tomahawk. Soon other Indians joined him, and still others, all of them with eagle-feather head gear and tomahawks.

But the girls did not wait to count how many, or to watch them cluster into a band. Fast as their ponies could speed they made for the lodges, reaching them just in time to flee with the rest of the tribe, who had scented the danger, three miles up a river now known as the Jefferson.

But the Minnetarees followed them and fell upon them there. In their warpaint, ornamented with scalps, bear's claws and wolves' teeth, waving tomahawks, and amidst blood-curdling yells and din of tom-toms, they made indeed a terrible horde. Bird-

child and Prairie-flower saw bloodshed too dreadful to picture. They sought to save themselves by instinct, just as antelopes or fawns or any other little wild creatures would have done.

What Prairie-flower did we do not know, but what Bird-child did has come down to us. Darting into the tall grass and dropping flat down into it, she began gliding through it with a serpentine movement. But she could not move fast enough to get away from the Minnetaree who had seen and followed her.

Just as he would have laid his great red hand upon her, she screamed, sprang to her feet, and into the stream—for he had come upon her at the edge of a river. The poor, frightened child leaped from stone to stone in the shallow water, but he caught her when she was only half across, as a wolf catches a fawn.

CHAPTER IV.

Instead of killing Bird-child, they carried her away captive, taking Prairie-flower also. Now began a march full of torment. Many a trip had the girls taken, but never one like this. Not however because they swam the swift currents of rivers and climbed straight up and over crags so high and steep that it would seem not even the mountain goats could climb them. Any such danger would have been only rare fun for them ordinarily. Not even because they were cruelly treated, bound to ponies by rawhide thongs that cut into their wrists and ankles, and at camping

places picketed out as the ponies were and with no other food than grass and roots—but because of terror of the unknown. The Minnetarees were anxious to be at home, showing their scalps, captives and stolen ponies; so they rode many miles a day, over mountains and plains, through canyons and valleys.

One morning Bird-child missed Prairie-flower and supposed of course she had been killed. After this the thongs cut still more deeply, and she could never stir without having fierce eyes fastened upon her.

Prairie-flower was out of misery, but Bird-child had now no company except the far-away stars when she lay awake nights, weeping bitter, hopeless tears. Gladly would she have slipped off alone into the forests, for she did not dread the wild animals as she dreaded the Minnetarees. If only she could escape perhaps she might be able to find her way back, or at least to die in some place that would seem like home because it would be in the midst of flowers, waving grass and whispering pines.

But such a chance never came, though when they were well out of the mountains and on the plains she was unbound from the pony and made to walk over the rough ground until her feet were torn and bleeding.

At last the Minnetarees reached their own land. There they had a war dance the first thing, putting fresh paint on their fierce faces, and decorating themselves anew with necklaces of wolves' teeth and the scalps they had taken. Poor Bird-child had to look

on while they danced and yelled around her people's scalps, which they flaunted at the tops of long poles and had strung around the inside of hoops; acting out as well as they could the terrible scene in the Shoshone camp. All through the night they howled and danced to the beating of tom-toms, only stopping long enough to feast on dog meat.

There may have been a looker-on who pitied as he noticed the bruised and wretched little being who shivered in nameless dread. For all Bird-child's pretty buoyancy had gone, as the freshness leaves a flower that is torn from its stem and trampled upon the prairie.

CHAPTED V.

But the Minnetarees did not torture Bird-child to death, and after that first terrible night she felt an interest in them, in spite of the fact that as a slave she had to drudge and to go cold and hungry. For she was stout-hearted and though a remarkably gentle one, still an Indian.

The Minnetarees had better lodges than the Shoshones, using logs as well as rushes and grasses in building them; so the lodges were really half huts, which they divided into rooms with a matting woven from long grasses, also carpeting the rooms with this same matting.

But what pleased Bird-child best of all was the way they had of dressing deer-skin; for they made it soft and almost white and then embroidered it with

tiny, bright-colored beads. She never lost a chance of watching the daughters of the tribe prepare it and cover it with the beads; little dreaming, however, of a time when she would be richer than the richest of them.

For she did not stay with the Minnetarees long. They sold her to a white man, the first she had ever looked upon, unless she had seen him that terrible first night with the Minnetarees. His name was Toussaint Charboneau. When she was still very young, not more than fourteen or fifteen, he married her. She had slipped into womanhood the faster from being far removed from the pleasures which would have tempted her to remain a child.

Safe to say any girl of the Minnetarees would have been glad of him for a husband, for Indian maidens counted it a high honor to marry a white man. Bird-child had now all the bright beads she wanted, if such a thing could be, besides other pretty things, among them Haiqua shell ornaments. Every Indian girl longed for these shells, although only the more fortunate ones ever got them, since they came from the far-away ocean. And the Haiqua shells really were very pretty when polished until they were pearl-like.

In her garb of soft cream-colored deer-skin, moccasins, leggings and frock, all to match, the costume rich in embroidery of beads, porcupine quills and feathers, she did not look like a person who had ever been a slave.

The Mandans were neighbors of the Minnetarees and a still more enlightened tribe. Now that she was

married, Bird-child spent much of her time among them. So again she had a chance to get the knowledge that she loved. Her husband preferred the Indian mode of living, and so was satisfied when his low-voiced wife ministered to his comfort in the way that was natural to her. Thus outwardly her life ran smoothly enough. But the heart of the bereaved little girl lived on and was lonely even in the midst of home ties. Sadness found a home in her dark eyes. The homesick yearning was with her constantly. It made even the hours she spent at beadwork long.

Whenever she would appear with her materials at the door of her lodge, where the light was best, children would cluster near, such attraction for them had the process of the embroidery.

First Tsa-ka-ka-wia, as they called Bird-woman, would select her colors, opening the fringed and tasseled buckskin bag that held the beads and laying them before her at convenient intervals; stretching the pliant skin upon her lapboard, she would smooth it carefully; and then from it cut out the moccasins, girdle or whatever else she intended making; next she punched tiny holes wherever the beads were to go. Taking a single thread from the skein of silvery sinews and stringing the beads upon it, she wove it in and out until stars and wreaths and fantastic designs had grown upon the cream-colored ground.

All this the children would watch with breathless interest, but the mystery of sadness about Tsa-ka-ka-wia they did not like, and no sooner would she cease

work than they would leave her for their play with sunflower stalk horses and corn-cob dolls. Their shouts of joy would make the homesick heart sadder still by awakening the memories which were so sweet and yet so painful.

The Dakota land had its beauties: woods rich in ferns, blossoms and moss; and moonlight that made the muddy Missouri seem like melted silver. An Indian's love of nature led her into the woods often, but the balm they gave could not heal the homesick heart; and the sight of wildflowers brought back the memory of the wildflowers she and Prairie-flower had gathered. Poor Prairie-flower; it made Bird-child shudder to think what had become of her.

And when Mandans and Minnetarees gathered outside their lodges to fill summer evenings with sociability, the exile's attention would wander from their stories, and from the fireflies that floated and gleamed in the dusky air, and she would wish with an impassioned fervency for her mountains whose winter seasons would have been dearer to her than Dakota summers.

Often she dreamed of being back again and finding everything unchanged; or that she had never gone away. And she loved those dreams even though it made her still sadder to wake up and find that they were only dreams and that her own home was just as far away from her as ever.

PART TWO.

CHAPTER I.

The Indians were having more to interest them than in many a day. Strange white men had come and were putting up lodges quite as if they meant to remain.

These Indians, not being a busy people, spent much of their time watching the work and wondering; but Bird-woman did not see the white men until after she had heard much about them, admired the gay clothes they had given a few of the braves, and helped to get the vegetables that herself and the Mandan wives sent them for presents; for the Mandans had their carefully planted gardens in which grew corn, pumpkins, beans and summer squashes.

Then one day, with an aged Indian woman, who was like herself the wife of a white man, she took the walk through the November woods that led to the camping place. Here indeed was much to interest, from the chief with red hair to the black man York, whose hair was like that of the Buffalo except for being black instead of brown.

Indian women were not new to Lewis and Clark, for the strangers were none other, but they seem to have noticed especially this one, who wore the soft graceful hanging Mandan garments as though they

were her native garb, but whose quiet manner contrasted with her many gay ornaments.

Her husband, who happened to be present at the first meeting, gave her name in its Indian form of "Tsa-ka-ka-wia," though he pronounced it with a French accent, making it sound more like Sacajawea. Sacajawea it was written down and has since been spelled. Charboneau translated it, explaining that the Tsa-ka-ka, or Sacaja, meant bird, and the wia, or wea, woman; so it was Bird-woman. He also told of how she had been stolen from the Rocky Mountains, and of how he had bought her for his wife.

Now when the men heard the place she had been stolen from named, they looked at her again and with renewed interest, and they asked when she was stolen and whether she remembered the country and language.

Bird-woman did not know the alphabet, but her Indian education in the lore of mountain, prairie, wood and stream had quickened all her instincts, and the hope that in some way, through these men, she would get back to the land for which she was so homesick, fell upon her like a beam of light.

And that hope grew stronger as the time passed, for she learned not only that Lewis and Clark were going toward the setting sun into her own country, but that they would need some one to show them the way and to talk to the Indians for them.

Why should she not be this person? Bird-woman asked herself the question.

It was as if she drew good fortune unto herself by the intensity of her longing, for they decided to take her with them when they went westward in the Spring, both herself and her husband.

CHAPTER II.

Bird-woman spent much time at the "fort," as the men called the lodge they had built of cottonwood tree trunks. Almost as much at home as in her own wigwam, she busied herself in her usual ways.

A time-honored Indian custom made it the duty of the woman to take charge of the game after it had been killed. So Bird-woman cut buffalo meat into thin strips which she hung properly upon drying racks. She pounded pemmican and cared for the vegetables that the Mandans continued to bring, slicing pumpkins and squashes into thin rings and then linking the rings into chains.

Too many pairs could not be made of the moccasins that would be needed when the party were not in canoes, but walking over ground painful on account of sharp-edged stones and thorny cactus; nor too many samples of bead work to take home. But one tiny sheet of doeskin was carefully embroidered with birds and flowers for a very different purpose; it was to be the coverlet of a cradle board. Among the blessings which the season of snow and ice brought to Bird-woman was a pappoose, to which she gave the name Baptiste.

The freshness of a grove clung to the newly-made fort; its fire leaped higher and crackled more merrily than ever did the blaze in an Indian lodge. The chains of pumpkin and squash, the heaps of corn, piles of beans and drying meat, besides foods new to Indians that the white men had brought with them, gave evidence of plenty.

Captain Lewis may have seemed moody and silent at times, but Captain Clark was always jovial and the others were sociable, black York having drolleries that were a never failing source of entertainment. Of Indian company there was no lack, both on account of the abounding cheer and interest and the possibility of a gift from a chest that was known to hold medals, looking glasses, beads, paints, knives and other things to delight an Indian heart. Such good things as coffee, sugar, bacon and apple sauce, added to the Indian foods, made each meal at the fort a feast. York was a puzzle; had he been painted? would the black wear off or wash off? He told the Indians that he had once run wild in the woods, and that his master had caught him and tamed him. And the motley household included a dog so different from the wolfish Indian dogs that he also excited much curiosity and interest. With canine majesty Rover sauntered slowly about the fort or basked before the fire until such time as a captain or a soldier felt in the mood for showing his accomplishments; then before an audience of wondering Indians, he would shake hands, speak, march

and perform the other tricks of a white man's well educated dog.

Near the beginning of the Moon of Difficulty good cheer rose to its greatest height. The jolliest songs were sung and the best food was eaten; no work interrupted dancing and laughing. Besides the color of the ruddy blaze, the rich meat, the yellow pumpkins and golden corn, there was that of a beautiful banner, the American flag, which hung at one end of the room. This great medicine day of the whites was Christmas.

So sped the time that lay before her visit home like a prairie, a not altogether flowery prairie, if only because the ill-will of a certain Madame Jussaume made cactus patches upon it. This Madame Jussaume seems to have spent as much time at the fort as did Bird-woman. She also was the Indian wife of a French trader. Bird-woman, like many another homesick captive of her race, had impaired her health by pining. The ravages of the grief had been checked too late, and she fell dangerously ill. Captain Clark, who had medical skill, treated her successfully during an acute attack of sickness, but she grew worse steadily, until it seemed as if they would set out in the Spring without her. Unwilling that this should be so, the captains made a point of coaxing back her strength; but when they ordered broths made for her and that she be given the juciest steaks, Madame Jussaume grew furiously jealous. Bird-woman in her weakened state could make little resistance, but was at the

mercy of the torments her enemy devised; until one day the jealousy expressed itself in a new and unexpected way. The madame packed up her things and left the fort.

But a new and deeper anxiety developed for Bird-woman. Her visit home was in peril from another cause than ill-health. A change came over Charboneau, whom some one has described as consisting mainly of a tongue to wag in a mouth to fill. Each day he grew more insolent and quarrelsome. Bird-woman had eyes that saw and ears that heard. Too well she knew what the outcome might be. At last the thing that she dreaded came to pass; Charboneau boldly announced that he withdrew from the service of Lewis and Clark, that neither he nor his wife would go to the Shining Mountains with them in the Spring.

However at a loss Lewis and Clark might have been in the Rockies without her, the bitter sorrow of the disappointment would fall upon the heart of the sixteen-year-old wife, who felt the need of a visit home none the less strongly because of the child which now bound her to the Mandan village and to her husband with a new tie.

Unobtrusive as a veritable bird of the wildwood, she yet may have had a controlling influence. Certain it is that someone or something induced Charboneau to reconsider; with becoming humility he asked to be put back on the payroll. His petition was granted, and Bird-woman's skies were blue again.

With her mind at ease she would look for hours at a time out upon the vast prairies, white except for the flocks of brown snow-birds that settled here and there, and strive to remember, for the benefit of Lewis and Clark, by just what trails and streams the Minnetarees came when they brought her from her own dear home. How well she succeeded appears in the written records of the great expedition.

Often Bird-woman would lose her sense of outward things in a reverie. Time and distance, Mandans and Minnetarees and the new, pleasant life at the fort alike would become as naught. She would see only a cluster of wigwams in a cool and fragrant land; they were among mountains and sparkling willow-fringed streams and pine forests. And in and among them were the long-lost friends of her childhood. She even saw the old-time dogs and ponies; and upon their accustomed mats in one of the wigwams sat her father and mother and her grandparents with little children, her brothers and sisters, tucked in among them.

Dearer even than visions of the glad out-door life in summer was this scene within the family wigwam, even though the uncertain knowledge of how sadly changed it must be, if only by the same raid that had snatched her away so cruelly, threw a gloomy shadow over the picture.

CHAPTER III.

The longed-for day had come. Eight canoes rocked on the current of the Missouri. Gardening,

weaving, embroidering, and dressing of skins had ceased for an hour in the Mandan village; and its people watched the setting forth of the strangers who had made themselves so well-liked and of the one of their own number who from a hapless slave had become a personage of importance.

The afternoon of early April had not so far waned but that its light shone strong upon the scene. Powerful warriors, grave matrons, graceful maidens and elf-like children made up the dusky group. They moved excitedly about and chattered, watching the black man who had been an object of such intense curiosity to them, the soldiers, grave and dignified Captain Lewis and bluff Captain Clark; or having a last visit with Bird-woman and her baby. An important feature of the scene was this baby upon his bright new cradle-board, who in his wonder of what it all meant forgot the tinkling, gay-colored trinkets which had been hung from the hood of the cradle-board, within reach of his little hands and for the delight of his eye and ear.

At last the moment came. Final adieus were said. Bird-woman stepped into the canoe pointed out to her, then thirty-one men embarked in their bateaux. There was a tugging of oars and the boats moved up stream. The gay group that had watched from the shore, the fort, the village, all grew distant until they were no longer in view.

Mandans and Minnetarees, scattered along the river, sought Bird-woman to bid her farewell and

express a hope for her safe return. Thus out of the misery of that night of the war-dance, when she lay too crushed and bleeding for hope, had come new friendship and love, as well as the joy of a visit to the home she had believed lost forever.

The frontiersmen and the wonderfully strong-hearted Indian girl were appreciative of the clear, cool, sunny days and other beauties of the mild Moon of Eggs—as much so as though they had not been so well able to endure bitter hardship, including the most inclement weather.

Soon they were in the midst of such a Spring as the world knew in its youth. Bright green prairie, the play-ground of antelope and deer, stretched wide as the sky. Swans and snow-white geese fed upon the young grass. Taller and taller grew the grass; then a more sudden and dazzling change came over it. One morning the voyagers awakened to find that wild flowers, bright enough to delight even an Indian's eye, had blossomed and were mingling their hue with the emerald.

But the life had a sterner phase than delicate beauty. The Missouri was not so smooth as the prairies; it resisted ascent with sandbars and snags, and by the strength of its own current. Aided by the wind which filled the air with fine sand at the same time, it threw up clouds of drenching spray and set in motion whirlpools that roughly buffeted the boats. For all its incivilities, it would guide them, according to its own whimsical ramblings, ever up-

ward, between bluffs and through the open, straight into the Shining Mountains. So the boats toiled up it day by day.

His mother's enforced idleness in the canoe gave baby Baptiste more coddling than fell to the lot of most Indian infants. We may be sure that when the arms of Bird-woman, strong and skillful as those of a man, were not needed in helping with the management of the boats, they held him in the most loving fashion; but ashore he was bound to a cradle-board and there contented himself while his energetic mother accomplished more than a man's share of the work of the camp, but always with eye and ear alert for any sign of moving bush or low growl, that harm lurked near Baptiste.

All Indian mothers possessed instincts that enabled them to protect their offspring from the dangers of the mountains, woods and prairies; but Baptiste had been favored above other pappooses, for the intelligence, courage, presence of mind, industry, goodness and mildness that Lewis and Clark praised in Bird-woman were for his sake first of all. Then, too, there was the white man's dog; it was capable of keeping guard and probably often found exercise for sagacity, fidelity and friendliness in so doing.

After the routine work of the camp had been done came his happy time; for then his mother would sling him, cradle-board and all, across her shoulder and carry him with her wherever she went to hunt for such dainties of Nature's big larder as would be likely to

please other than Indian tongues. With a stick that ended in a sharp-pointed crook she unearthed choice edible roots and found a way into the nests where field mice had stored away artichokes; or when the Moon of Flowers had blended softly with the Moon of Strawberries, gathered the scarlet fruit from where it grew most finely flavored, Baptiste lying near in tall grass, which enclosed him lovingly.

A wearisome sameness must have marked the long succession of days filled with the labor of the camp and of toiling up the river on either side of which the unchanging plains stretched for weeks. Yet there were times of excitement.

Once during a furious wind storm the canoe holding the Charboneau family capsized. First Bird-woman made for the shore with her precious baby; then she plunged fearlessly back into the raging river where, with the movements of a water sprite, she not only baffled whirlpools and high waves that would have overwhelmed her, but darted about in the water and succeeded in saving many papers that floated and swirled upon the current. Perhaps she had no conception of the value of the papers she had saved; but it is easier to suppose that she had become so impressed with the importance with which Lewis and Clark regarded the lines and many queer marks they had put upon white paper that she saved them now in much the same spirit that she would have saved sacred charms of the medicine men of her own people.

Captain Lewis, watching from an over-hanging bluff, in his anxiety for the rescue of those papers,

would have himself plunged into the flood but that he realized the uselessness of such an attempt.

This intrepid girl voyageur became familiar with a method of hunting such as would have overcome with wonder and admiration the most renowned brave. For even the dread grizzly bear would yield up his life to a single pale-face hunter, though he had won such a respect from the Indians that they seldom went out to attack him except in regularly organized war party. His presence near was the signal for adornment in paint, eagle feathers and trophies of the hunt and chase, for dancing of the war dance and observance of the sacred rites that would have preceded a real battle. In after years braves would be constrained to listen while a woman described what manner of hunting she had seen during her trip to the sea with Lewis and Clark.

The prairie land abounded in buffalo, deer, elk and antelope; wolves, coyotes, wild-cats and cougars made the nights hideous. Swans and ducks, whose white plumage even the muddy river could not sully, hovered along the current; the bowery aisles of cottonwood and willow were aviaries from which arose choruses of wild melody, while bird notes fell upon the prairie as if out of the warm sky.

Fawns and antelopes, timid yet gentle as pets, peered through leafy curtains with pretty curiosity; or where the river banks were without forests, from the crest of some upland, antlered monarchs watched in the fearlessness of nobility; buffaloes roaming in vast

herds at a distance looked like brown islands upon the billowy grass.

There were mirages and wonderful sunrises and sunsets; brilliant changes came over the prairie, slowly and one by one, with the blooming of the different hued flowers. But the beautiful prairie was not always peaceful; the wind storms that enraged the river, swept it, "bending low the flowers and grasses."

So the region was at once changeful and changeless.

But no wigwams sent up smoke wreaths; there were no trails worn down to the river by women who came for water; no ponies grazed, nor children sported, in the tall grass. This rich hunting ground seemed without people.

Steadfastly the voyagers combated the river. And the rolling prairies proved not to be everlasting. Hills became higher and more numerous; they bore dwarf cedars and even stunted pines. Bluffs, canyons and rock-masses abounded; prickly-pear covered large tracts of ground, grass lost its lush, rank development and the river grew clear.

Forty-nine days full of toil and monotony and beauty had spent themselves when finally the Rockies, named by the Indians Shining Mountains, were seen from the summit of a knoll. Beyond valleys, hills and streams they lay, dream-like in the distance, rimming the horizon with a line of dark-blue that climbed into gleaming white. The vision thrilled Lewis and Clark with emotion; it unloosed tongues, and the

pleasing prospect was discussed by all save Bird-woman, who kept quiet, however her heart may have swelled; the mountains were the embodiment of her dream, and they held its realization; they were a magnet which would have drawn her unto themselves had the power of choice been hers.

But Lewis and Clark traveled slowly for the reason that they not only explored the land, but paddled and poled their boats up the streams they found flowing into the Missouri, giving them names and placing them upon a map. One stream they called Sacajawea's River in honor of their guide. It is near the mouth of the Mussellshell, but now bears the name of Crooked Creek.

And Bird-woman's own health caused a long delay. Soon after the Shining Mountains had been descried, she fell so dangerously ill that it seemed as if baby Baptiste would be left without a mother in this lonely region where there was no other woman to be found, and that the expedition would lose one of its valued members.

In his notes Captain Lewis mentioned the pitifulness of her distress, added to by the utter dependence of the baby upon her, and in the same breath spoke of his own fear for the expedition if it should be compelled to enter the Rockies without her; while Captain Clark gave of the medicines which had been brought from St. Louis. But an Indian's ailments are more likely to yield to some purely natural remedy. Such was near in a sulphur spring at the Great

Falls. Captain Lewis had hurried on ahead of the main party in his impatience to learn the meaning of a certain steady roaring that sounded in the distance. He found that the roaring was made by a waterfall—or rather, by a series of them—the Great Falls of the Missouri, as they are now called. He paused before the first cataract, lost in awe and admiration; then at once sent a messenger back to tell Captain Clark of the discovery. Captain Clark hurried on, and the whole expedition went into camp at the falls, near the sulphur spring whose healing waters were to restore Bird-woman.

At intervals along ten miles of its length the river plunged wildly and beautifully over high straight-up-and-down stone walls, making diamond spray in the sunlight. Below one of these cataracts a little island lay in the river. Here an eagle had built her nest in the top of a cottonwood tree. Through the veil of mist that it would have seemed might have screened the nest, the keen-eyed Indians saw it and always mentioned it when they described the falls. To this day that particular cataract bears the name of Black Eagle, while three others have been christened Crooked, Rainbow and Great Falls. Between these cascades foamed rapids.

Nearly opposite the island with the eagle's nest, like an underground river escaping imprisonment, a full stream gushed among rocks and bounded to meet the Missouri, down which it flowed as a rivulet, its sparkling blue visible for half a mile. Wreathed in

greenery and wonderfully clear through its limitless depth, the great spring merited the praise Lewis and Clark gave it.

Level green stretches shaded with cottonwood and willow gave restfulness to the scene at the falls.

In the midst of such beauty the banner that had hung upon the wall at Fort Mandan was one day unfurled, and Bird-woman celebrated the great holiday of the nation in whose history her own was destined to have a place—for the party honored Fourth of July by singing, music, dancing on the level greensward, feasting and speech-making.

Fish and game abounded; so roasting and toasting and boiling went on steadily. Few invalids have benefit of more nourishing food or purer air and water than had Bird-woman here, although Lewis and Clark attributed her recovery to the sulphur spring. After a single attack of fever and delirium, she grew strong enough not only to leave the couch of skins, spread in a pleasant glade, but also to share in the work of the camp and to roam through the picturesque region.

One day, with Captain Clark, her husband and York, she started to see the series of cascades. No sooner had they reached Black Eagle Fall than Captain Clark, looking up, saw a threatening cloud, and the July heat gave way to a sudden coolness. The thunder-bird of Indian tradition flashed its eyes until fire shot from the sky and flapped its wings until the flapping sounded upon earth as a low rumbling, all as a token that he intended lessening the volume of the

lake of water he carried upon his back by shaking the surplus upon the earth.

Knowing how furiously the wind rages in this region during a storm, Captain Clark led the party away lest they should be blown from the bluff upon which they were standing into the river. Finding what seemed a safer place in a deep ravine about a quarter of a mile above the falls, they had sought shelter under a rock which made a natural roof through which no raindrop yet had ever found a way. So it would seem they were safe from a wetting.

Captain Clark laid down his guns and compass and Bird-woman placed the baby, who was as usual upon his cradle-board, at her own feet.

The thunder-bird worked himself into a veritable frenzy; deeper and more dreadful grew the rumblings that seemed to shake the earth; the willows and cottonwoods were bowed by gusts that might have riven mighty oaks; and rain fell so fast that the drops were not visible. Still neither Bird-woman nor Captain Clark dreamed of danger.

But fast rolling down the ravine came a strange and terrible sight, a bank of water fifteen feet high, frothing angrily and tearing up the rocks that stood in its way. It came from a cloudburst that had taken place above, but Bird-woman may well have thought that the whole lake had rolled off the back of the thunder-bird.

Captain Clark first saw the water bank bearing down upon them, faster than any wild animal can

run, though of course there was no danger of its turning out of its path to chase them; so he took time to snatch his things. But no sooner had Bird-woman pulled her baby from the cradle-board than the board was washed away by a stream that ran on ahead of the terrible water monster they must escape.

She held the baby high in her arms while Captain Clark lifted her up a cliff at the top of which—as good luck had it—stood Charboneau. He reached down, seized her hand, and pulled her upward into safety. But it was Captain Clark rather than she who had the narrow escape; for the wonder is that he was not drowned instead of only drenched by the water that ran on ahead. Had it caught them it must certainly have carried them down the ravine and into the river, from which they would have been swept over the falls.

Sight-seeing was ended for that day, but the storm brought joy and brightness in its wake. The cloud-rack changed from leaden to silver-grey and then to fleecy white. Sunbeams changed the drops of water which trembled everywhere to diamonds and a rainbow arched the sky. Wild creatures, that had hidden themselves in fright, ventured forth from cave and nest and burrow. The air rang with the songs of thrushes, robins, turtle-doves, linnets, gold-finches, wrens and black-birds. The soft rushing of the falls, which had been drowned in the uproar of the tempest, sounded again.

The morning of July 15th was eventful, for then they again embarked upon the Missouri, this time

above the falls. The whole party felt glad if only because they had been worse beset by wild animals here than in any other camping-place. The men were glad to be relieved of the hard work of the portages. Throughout the long days the sound of their hewing and pounding had echoed from the grove where they had wrought cottonwood into rude wagons. The captains were eager to be on their way, and Bird-woman, who yearned for the meeting with her people, rejoiced to be moving in their direction once more.

CHAPTER V.

She had thought she remembered, yet soon the very air held a quality which thrilled her with a joyful sense of recognition.

Once when a single moccasion had been picked up below the Great Falls, she had shown dread at the sight and counselled hurrying on; for it was a Blackfoot moccasin and had brought back the terrors of fright and of realization that her childhood had known. But here, where in her day the tribe had never ventured except at peril of their lives, she felt a strange happiness. Delusively interwoven with her own necessarily slender memories were the tales she had heard the grandmothers of the tribe tell of the region. And they had not known it as a danger-ground, but as the scene of such a happy, care-free life as their children would never know.

But it was no mistaken memory she had of the sulphur-yellow cactus blossoms that now overspread the

jagged plain. She had known them well since the day when as a venturesome toddler she had trotted eagerly toward these prettiest flowers of all, because they were yellower than sunbeams, only to have her little hands cut by the thorns that guarded the blossoms so jealously.

That the cactus flowers were to be looked at only and not picked had been her second lesson from the book of Nature; the first had been that the birds and chipmunks were not hers to handle. Even these days of infancy did not seem so very long gone here amidst their surroundings.

She began to hope for a meeting with her people even before entering the mountains; the men anyway were likely to be down on the plain for their summer hunt; for amongst a sudden throng of memories came one that the annual hunt and blooming of the cactus had taken place in the same moon. And finally in the distance did appear the semblance of lodges, but with no sign of life about them.

Bird-woman's hope was strong. It had not yet been weakened by disappointment. A single hunter might easily have lagged behind and be now occupying one of the lodges. From him could be learned the whereabouts of the tribe. But when the lodges were reached they found no one. Silently Bird-woman peered into each. They were indeed deserted. She identified them as Shoshone lodges, but gave no hint of her own disappointment, because there was no one near who would have understood. She had entered an invisible

world, where even her husband was a stranger and where she was companionless except for the baby whose brown eyes held a sympathy that none but the mother could discern, but which she knew would never fail her.

The next hint she had of her people did indeed fill her with sadness and fear. The inner bark of the pine trees had been stripped off and eaten, a sign that starving Indians had tried to save themselves from death by this meagre food. She explained the appearance of the girdled trees to Lewis and Clark. Near by were the remains of other willow lodges.

Stronger grew the current and deeper and narrower the river. Spurs of the mountain range ran out upon the plain as if to receive it.

Between rock walls twelve hundred feet high the Missouri ran like a thread. Boldly the canoes entered this awesome chasm. And as they did so Lewis and Clark named the range of rocks the Gate of the Mountains. Involuntarily Bird-woman clasped the baby tightly. If by a sudden spring he should fall into the water here there would be no hope of rescuing him, so deep it was and swift. The rock walls towered abruptly from the river's edge, with no gravelly margin or bordering greensward. The sunlight that streamed into the chasm from the faraway rift could do little more than gild the tops of the walls; so deep twilight prevailed upon the river. All sounds had an unearthly quality, even the baby's laugh being weird and hollow.

Through such gloom they made their way into the mountains, emerged from the Gates and found a suit-

able camping place, but too late for Bird-woman to do aught more than realize at last she was in the land for which she had yearned through six weary years.

But she was up betimes the following morning. All the old-time greenness and freshness and fragrance greeted her, but where were the people?—the old folks whom she had loved; the toil-worn, patient-faced mother whose burdens she would have continued to lighten had she not been stolen; her father, brothers and sisters and loved friends?

Thankfully she recalled that the white chiefs had determined upon a meeting with the tribe, since horses must be substituted for their canoes. They would make a careful search, and when had Lewis and Clark ever failed in an undertaking? Bird-woman's faith was akin to superstition.

During the second day's travel in the mountains, a ruddy light that was neither of sunrise nor sunset glowed in the sky and through the pines. Too well Bird-woman understood. Indians had heard gun-shots. This could mean to them but one thing—that their enemies from the plains toward the rising sun, whom traders furnished with firearms, were in the mountains. The Shoshones had tarried only long enough to set fire to dry grass and pitchy timber as a warning to the stragglers of the tribe, and were now fleeing from pursuit, with all the advantage in their favor that horses and familiarity with the country gave.

The captains sought to avert the mischief that had been wrought by the firing of the gun. Hereafter a

gun should not be fired until all the country within distance of its sound had been reconnoitered for Indians; and upon such expeditions pieces of the white man's cloth and paper were strewn freely as a sign to any Indians who might happen upon the track. Flags were hoisted in the canoes in a vain hope that some hiding Indian, seeing them, would spread the news among his people that not enemies, but palefaces, were at hand.

Bird-woman, plied with questions concerning her memory of the country, demonstrated beyond a doubt that she did remember it well, insisting that the Missouri would soon spread itself into three forks, and identifying a creek that Captain Lewis named White-earth as one to which her people had been wont to go for white paint.

This simple fact she told, reserving for herself the vision of joyous mornings when children and dogs joined the excursion that went for the paint.

The three forks of the river were found, as she had said they would be. Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin they were named, after three great statesmen at Washington,—the President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury.

The canoes were launched upon the Jefferson. Its head-waters would soon be reached. Plainly the captains realized that as strangers in the country the chances were against their being able to find such a passage across the mountains as would lead them to the head-waters of the Columbia, or of some stream

flowing into the Columbia. Thus Bird-woman's familiarity with the region must have been reassurring. But even should the sources of the Columbia be found, to transport the canoes overland would be well-nigh impossible; and from present signs the available timber would not be suitable for constructing new boats. Horses must be had for that part of the trip which did not lie along a navigable river, and until such time as canoes could be made, or bought from the Indians.

So the hope in Bird-woman at this point was not as a guide, except to her own people; but as one through whom great favors might be received from the tribe to which she would be restored.

The love of the Indian woman for her kindred and home is the stronger from its being her only interest. Such a love was pitted with the determination of Lewis and Clark in a search for the people who made these mountains their refuge.

CHAPTER VI.

Captain Lewis, with three of the men, left the boats and hastened ahead, determined to find Indians. After keen outlook he did spy one, but could not coax him near, though he tried hard and long, holding a blanket high above his own head for the Indian to see, and then making as if he would spread it upon the ground, which in the sign language meant that he in-

vited him for a friendly talk. But the Indian looked and fled.

Later the captain met two women, a man and some dogs. The three Indians gazed curiously from afar and then sat down as if waiting for the strangers. But when Captain Lewis and his men were within half a mile, and just as the captain would have advanced, bearing before him an unfurled flag, the women fled over the hill upon which they had been standing. The man let Captain Lewis come within one hundred yards of him, then he too glided away. But the dogs ventured near. He would have tied around their necks handkerchiefs in which he had fastened beads, and in this novel way would have sent gifts to the Indians. But the dogs refused to be touched.

Next he saw two women and a little girl. One of the women fled, but the other and the little girl crouched down with their heads bowed as if expecting to be killed. Captain Lewis took the woman's hand and raised her to her feet. This single friendly advance relieved her fear. Three other white men coming up, Captain Lewis gave them gay beads, bright paint and small mirrors to hold for a moment; then he said to the Indians, "Call her," meaning the other woman, who was still running. Though she had been so timid, she came upon being called and upon seeing what wonderful things the *tabba bone* had, and guessing that he would give them as presents. The captain put red paint on the cheeks of both women and the little girl, which meant that there should be peace and

friendship between him and them. The confidence of these Indians had been won.

Captain Lewis told them by signs that he wanted to visit their camp, and they appeared willing he should do so, leading him along for about two miles, when of a sudden sixty mounted warriors appeared in view; he advanced to meet them. The chief, who rode in front, seemed puzzled until he had spoken to the women and been shown the presents. Then he leaped from his horse and gave a cordial greeting, saying: *"Ah hi e! Ah hi e!"* meaning, "I am so glad! I am so glad!" The band of warriors followed his example, and all the men were honored with a greeting which they accepted graciously, though it included having the Indian cheeks, which were bedaubed with grease and paint, laid against their own. Then the peace pipe was smoked.

Next day Captain Lewis told of the large body of men he had with him; of how they had agreed to wait at a point on the river where the water had become too shallow for the boats until horses should be brought to help them transport the merchandise. He requested the Indians to furnish these horses, and also invited them to go to meet Captain Clark.

They granted the request finally, and accepted the invitation, but speedily became suspicious, acting as if they feared treachery. Captain Lewis reassured them, and Indians and whites set out together; but the former became suspicious again at the point on the river where Captain Clark should have been and was

not. Though the peace pipe had been smoked the white men felt themselves in grave danger.

Lewis and Clark were soon to learn what many a white man who came after them in this new country learned—the value of its native ladies as mediators when there was need of conciliating its lords. For when Bird-woman came she made the friendship that had been pledged a thing of reality.

CHAPTER VI.

The narrow canoes seemed to increase in discomfort as the time for quitting them drew near. The only other means of progress was to clamber along on shore enduring the miseries of the cactus thorns and jagged rocks. But the ever-increasing difficulties of navigation frequently made such a walk imperative. Often the July sun beat down with a heat that seemed unbearable. Strong men succumbed to the weariness and pain of the travel. Yet there was delicious relief from such hardship; for often low meadows, cooled by the shadows of cottonwoods, birches and willows, bordered the stream.

In one such camping-place Bird-woman recognized the spot where she had been happy for the last time that morning five years before. She gave the whole dark story just as it lay in her memory, the story of the coming of the Minnetarees. She pointed out the hill over which they had peered, and just where the

Shoshone lodges had stood, even fancying that she found traces of the ashes of their fires; and told how her people had escaped three miles, to be hunted down at last and treated with such cruelty as only Indians know.

Surely a sadness fell upon her here. The grass was as green as ever, trees were as bowery, the brook was as sparkling and birds sang as gayly. But there was no living thing, not even a pony or dog, but only phantoms of the lost past to welcome her.

They camped for dinner that day at the spot where the Minnetarees had overtaken the Shoshones and borne down upon them. Here again Bird-woman went over the story, telling how many more Minnetarees there were than Shoshones, and how the men had fled into the mountains on horseback; how the women and children had hidden or tried to hide; and of how she had attempted to cross the river, but had been caught in the middle of the stream.

So did her fancy bring back vanished events to actual scenes; not a cairn or islet or grove but had its story. Lonesome nights, during which coyotes barked and wolves howled and other wild creatures cried like children, would not let her forget that the pitiless Winter king had held the land in siege five times during her captivity. For the solemn murmurings, whisperings, sighings and sobbings of the summer night-wind suggested the strong, life-destroying blasts of winter. How many of her people had perished in their miserables caves?

Even the morning with all its brightness of sunshine and singing birds could not quite restore her hope after such a night. And Bird-woman's confidence, ordinarily, was a quality capable of reassuring even a Lewis or a Clark. Perhaps, in her own downheartedness, she sometimes wondered if after all she hadn't been mistaken in thinking she wanted to visit her old home more than anything else in life. Except for the pleasure of looking forward, what pleasure had she had in it so far? The darkest picture in her mind, which she wanted to let fade out, she had seen in fresh coloring at the spot where the Minnetarees had first fallen upon the Shoshones, and three miles up the Jefferson, where they had caught them. And there had been enough of hardship in the trip almost to overcome even an Indian girl.

Little did she guess that even as she thus troubled herself with forebodings, Captain Clark was with her people. Yet the Indians whom he had met were none other. On the night of August 16 she slept only four miles from them, but without knowing of their nearness.

CHAPTER VII.

Twenty-eight days of travel in the mountains and of the still more wearying suspense spent themselves. Along the way there were such signs of inhabitants as deserted lodges, foot-prints, and patches of ground torn as if by root-diggers. August 6 there loomed through the morning air the rocky point of a high

plain. It somewhat resembled the head of a massive stone animal. Beaver-head Rock Bird-woman called it, and Beaver-head Rock it remains to this day, besides having given the name to a county of Southwestern Montana. She felt confident that her people were in their summer camp a short distance beyond this rock, for such had been their custom in the old days.

It was four days after she identified it that Captain Lewis met her people. Bird-woman had not been mistaken in her conviction that they yet camped beyond the rock.

Early in the morning of August 17 ensued a meeting of which even Captain Clark, the blunt soldier, wrote with emotion. Sacajawea, her husband and Captain Clark were walking along the shore. Of a sudden the captain saw her show signs of great joy; pausing long enough to look backward toward him and the canoes, she pointed to several Indians who were ahead, at the same time sucking her finger-tips, a sign which among the Indians indicated one's mother or a mother's people. Then the girl who had been so self-repressed that she had been deemed stoical yielded herself to an ecstacy of happiness; the gravity of one who during her 16 years had known much pain and grief and toil vanished before a joy which found expression in a wild dance that suggested the whirlings, poisings and flutterings of a butterfly. Of a sudden the slave-wife and toil-worn mother had be-

come as gay and care-free a being as the Indian girl of poetry and romance.

The warriors sang a song of welcome; but Bird-woman heeded it not. Over the familiar ground she skipped in direction of the encampment toward which they had pointed. A large number of dusky people were grouped together in expectation. But the group was broken as she neared it by a young woman who made her way through the throng excitedly and with open arms ran toward the approaching guest.

Bird-woman stopped and looked—as if at a spirit. But the Indian girl before her was certainly flesh and blood. The girl broke the silence by cries of joy, or they may have been words of welcome. Then Bird-woman knew she had found Prairie-flower—Prairie-flower whom she had mourned as dead, but who had slipped away from the Minnetarees and managed to get home.

Captain Lewis and the chief received Captain Clark in a willow booth. Here he was seated on a white robe, and in his hair were tied six pearl-like shells. The *Ah hi e's! Ah hi e's!* said, and the embracings finished, the moccasins came off from every pair of feet as a sign that whoever should violate the compact about to be made would impose upon himself the penalty of walking bare-foot over the cactus plains forever.

Now came the ceremony of smoking the peace pipe. The chief lighted a pipe of polished green stone, made a short speech, then pointed his pipe east, south,

west, north; after which he made as if he would give it to Captain Clark, but drew it back and pointed it again, describing the magical circle four times in all. Next he pointed the stem, first to the heavens, then toward the earth. Finally he took three whiffs himself, after which each of the others had three puffs, thus concluding the ceremony that preceded the conference.

Bird-woman was now sent for to interpret. She came, delaying for the present the pleasure of looking among the Indians for her old-time friends. As the now happy girl ran lightly into the lodge, her attention was arrested; a strangely familiar voice fell upon her ear. More than dear remembered landscape or re-union with girl friends it made her realize she was at home; for it was the voice of her brother Cameahwait, who had become head of the tribe. So Lewis and Clark had been guided to the chief they sought by no less a personage than his sister.

An affecting and sweetly human little scene followed. Bird-woman, a child again, was at her brother's side in an instant. She dropped upon the ground beside him, impulsively, or as if to hide the embrace, throwing around him a corner of her own blanket. Her over-wrought nerves gave way, and she fell to sobbing. Cameahwait himself was visibly agitated; he soothed her with a tenderness that Indians are commonly not supposed to possess. A few words heavy with meaning were spoken; then mindful of her responsibility as interpreter she withdrew from his em-

brace to her own place, where with native dignity and as befitted the sister of a chief, she strove to forget herself for the good of the council. But she was only half successful in her effort to control her emotion, for her fitful sobs impeded the interpreting.

After the council she had from Cameahwait the sad news that all her family were dead except himself, another brother now absent from home, and a little boy, the child of her eldest sister. An Indian's assurance of a happy spirit land made the sorrowful disappointment bearable. A tiny and forlorn little Shoshone felt his loneliness vanish as he was clasped by two warm arms. In the fullness of her love Bird-woman claimed this child as her own, and had her will prevailed, would have taken him to the Pacific and from thence back to the Mandan village.

There was great comfort in the strong brother, who looked so grand in his decorations of eagle feathers, ermine tails, shells, porcupine quills, tusks, claws and bones; who besides his name of Cameahwait had the war name of Black Gun, which he had won for himself by his prowess in battle; and who was so honored by the people that they desired him for their chief. Of course, his sister delighted in talking with him; we can imagine the joy and pain that this brother and sister felt 100 years ago when her lips found at last full opportunity to speak a language they had lisped in infancy but had not uttered through five weary years. She would have spoken in household words of the camp and its people and of other things

in the mountains; but it was of the *tabba bone* he wanted to hear, and so it was of them she told.

In all her artless talk there was not one phrase which when weighed by the careful Cameahwait could do aught but strengthen his liking for Lewis and Clark.

A hundred people strove to be near Bird-child, as she still was to them; there were old folks more weather-beaten than she remembered them; boys and girls older than herself were so changed from the semblance of their childhood that she remembered them only with Prairie-flower's aid; her own friends held up babies like Baptiste for her to admire; and children who when she knew them had not out-grown the cradle-board were pushed forward by equally proud mothers. The days were not half long enough for her visiting in family lodges and old haunts.

But a black shadow of apprehension brooded near Bird-woman, following her even into the midst of all the love and friendliness; it was cast by the Indian who had once bought her for his wife. His bold black eyes followed her movements, and he consulted with Cameahwait concerning her. He had not forgotten the child so full of promise; that promise seemed now more than fulfilled.

Though Lewis and Clark mentioned handsome Indian women they never so mentioned their guide. So probably she lacked the beauty which many Indian women possess. But the letter of a traveler who saw her far east of the mountains several years after the

great trip had been accomplished contains an intimation that her outward semblance imaged her gentle spirit. Though she had suffered in mind and body during her exile, she had also gained much from close contact with a tribe more fortunately circumstanced than her own. She came finely arrayed and bringing the rich and powerful *tabba bone.* The love and interest that were making her a central figure were also keeping her for the time being as blithe as though responsibility and hardship had no place in her life. All this made a glamour through which the Shoshone looked, and almost decided to claim his affianced wife.

Too well Bird-woman understood the tribal code of honor to doubt that her brother would seek to restore her to the first purchaser in case insistence was made. Though however prolonged she would have had her visit, she had learned ere this that the tribe from which so many of her kinsfolks had departed for the spirit land could never again be to her what it had once been. After all, she now belonged rather to the Mandan village than the Shining Mountains. Her devotion was given to the Frenchman, on whom she had depended since the day he had delivered her from her Minnetaree captors. And if only for the sake of the baby Baptiste her heart fainted at thought of the family tie being dissolved.

The Shoshone viewed Baptiste with disfavor, and the once ardent wooer finally announced that on account of her incumbrance he relinquished his right

to the mother. Thus was averted an entanglement which might have resulted even tragically.

Another formal council was held, and such friendly reations were established as have not often prevailed between Indians and whites since William Penn held council with the Lenapes on the banks of the Delaware. Not only should the *tabba bone* have horses, but Cameahwait would aid them in every other way he could and would influence his friends to do likewise. He began by describing the way through the mountains and the perils that would be encountered, and by recommending the man who of all the Shoshones would make the best guide.

But it is impossible to estimate how much of Cameahwait's desire for the welfare of the party was inspired by a very personal concern for the welfare of his only sister.

Lewis and Clark found this chief frank and communicative. He gave them the wretched story of the confinement of himself and his people in the mountains, to which they listened sympathetically.

"If we had guns, instead of hiding ourselves in the mountains and living like bears on roots and berries we would dwell in the buffalo country in spite of our enemies, whom we never fear when we meet on equal terms," he said in conclusion.

These Shoshones were written down in the history of the expedition as a people who bore their misfortunes with dignity, making them a background for the display of nobility of character.

The distresses which could not break their spirit seemed not to have lessened their gaiety and love of dress; during the stay of the *tabba bone* and of their own Bird-woman they bedecked themselves gayly in fantastic apparel and gave themselves up to enjoyment. To them, as to all other Indians, York, the negro, was the wonder of wonders; they could not believe but that the blackness of his skin would wash off. The dog also was a curiosity. White men danced to the strains of a violin for the entertainment of the Indians. Lewis and Clark supplied the feasts that were a part of the pleasure. For the Shoshones had been encountered during one of their seasons of want; game had left the region and fish were few in the streams. But the white men, with their firearms and hooks, were wonderfully successful hunters and fishers.

But at a feast that included boiled antelope and mountain trout, squash and coffee, Bird-woman enjoyed best, because they seemed a part of her childhood, the cakes made of service-berries and choke-cherries, which had been baked in the sun. She gave lump sugar to Cameahwait, who pronounced it the best food he had ever eaten.

The white chiefs gave their brother chief a medal, carefully explaining it to him. It had a portrait of President Jefferson stamped upon one side, and upon the other, clapsed hands and a tomahawk. Presents of wearing apparel, knives, beads, moccasins, awls and looking-glasses were distributed among the tribe. In its praise of Bird-woman's people, the Journal men-

tions that though such treasures were displayed freely, no member of the tribe was tempted to theft; also, that the Shoshones never begged, though willing to give of all they possessed. It praises also their frankness and their perfect fairness in dealing; their courage, courtesy and manner of dress. It even records this obscure little band of Indians as being superior to the Dakotas, including the lordly Sioux.

Within fourteen suns the joy of the reunion belonged to the past, and Bird-woman was trudging daily farther and farther away from her share of the world's love. Even had she not been among the meek and lowly who cannot choose their lot, her gratitude and simple fidelity would have prevented the breaking of her promise to cross the mountains.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is a way of the Rockies to intersperse the gentle with the awful. So from the peaceful valley of the Shoshone encampment the thirty-one men and one woman entered a gloom shunned by the very wolves, though ravens, crows and hawks whirred amongst the crags or dropped down chasms that were yawning death-pits for all wingless creatures.

Over mountains steep and terrible and over trails where the displacing of a single stone might mean death or injury they toiled. Summit after summit was painfully won only for the disheartening view of another mountain to be scaled, for they stretched westward in

what seemed a never-ending succession. At midday the granite crags reflected a fierce heat; but there were days when the sun did not shine and when wintry blasts congealed the water in the streams, and hurled frost particles that cut like flint straight into the faces of the travelers.

One morning the camp awakened to find the hardness overspread with a coverlet softer and whiter than clouds in a summer sky. The rude winds were hushed and the air was bland. But the cheer of the snowstorm was deceptive and short-lived. The way lay beneath pine-trees, and the boughs slid their powdery weight upon the defenceless travelers, resulting in water-soaked garments, for the snow thawed quickly. Then the mountain blasts aroused from slumber; they froze the wet garments, and encased in ice the stones that lay upon the trail. The Indian ponies, inured to such traveling though they were, slipped to destruction or became useless through starvation and over-exertion. And there were times when the party had only roots, dried berries and melted snow for food and drink. Yet such a hard way would lead now into the cheer of an Indian camp, where the sprains and bruises suffered by all except the baby Bird-woman carried could be nursed before a rousing fire, and where warm robes would be given to take the place of wet blankets; now into some sunny valley where game was abundant; though too often into a worse discomfort than had been endured during the day.

For over a month they scaled granite walls and threaded dark forests, enduring summer heat and winter cold. Then one day the cavernous mountains rose behind them, and below them spread the valley of the Kooskooskee, where wigwams sent their smoke curling skyward.

They hastened down, Captain Clark in advance. He came upon two little Indian boys, who started to run in fright but were coaxed back by the offer of bright bits of ribbon. Then they bounded toward a cluster of wigwams into which they carried a message; and a single brave issued from among the wigwams cautiously. Captain Clark understood Indians well, and he re-assured this one, who led him into the village, where the people paid him honor in the name of an absent chief.

The party stayed among these Indians, the Nez Perces, until such time as canoes coud be built or purchased.

The Nez Perce women were in the midst of their annual root-digging; but they found time to be friendly. There were times when Bird-woman's heart ached with remembrance of those whom she should have seen in the camp of the Shining Mountains but had not seen. At such times she felt better contented in an Indian teepee than in the *tabba bone* camp with all its luxuries. So as one to the manner of Indian hospitality born, she frequented their lodges, conversing in the sign language, while Baptiste was at a greater advantage, speaking as he did the universal language

of infancy. But before the leaves had turned brown, while they were yet yellow like white man's wampum, the party embarked in new canoes upon the crystal Kooskooskee, which carried them into the Snake River, upon which they glided to the Columbia, departing without knowing how close to them death had lurked, for it is from Nez Perce legend that we get the

Story of Wat-ku-ese.

Wat-ku-ese with her people had gone into the mountain country for a buffalo hunt. But their enemies had fallen upon them here and routed them. Wat-ku-ese they carried away into captivity. From a slave's toil she would lift her eyes to gaze upon the barrier of the Shining Mountains. And she longed passionately for a chance to escape into them,—not for their own sake, but for the sake of meadows of blue camas from which they separated her. In drudgery, pain and hunger grew the hope that some night when the braves, tired out perchance after a hunt, slept too soundly to be awakened by barking dogs, she would be able to steal from the wigwams to the forests in whose recesses it would be easy to elude pursuit.

But even while she planned daring escape came another battle, and Wat-ku-ese was captured from her captors. Over thorny plains they forced the Nez Perce, and in direction of the rising sun, to a land where Indian corn grew and where there were white traders, the first she had ever looked upon. But even here the hope would not die, and at last the chance to

slip away came. Without the loaf of bread and the bottle of water, this Indian Hagar, who carried an infant, went forth into the wilderness of ravine-gashed prairie. She hid in the ravines by day; and by night, when the cries of wild animals rose in a hideous chorus and when the wind sounded like doom, she struggled forward with cut and bleeding feet. Captors could scarcely have goaded her into crueler marches, for the way lay over thorns and sharp-edged stones. But where the angel caused a well of water to gush for Hagar, traders gave Wat-ku-ese food and white man's coffee and welcomed her to the cheer of their fires. She would steal into their lodges, a weird, wild-looking creature, who was sure to excite pity. Hair that should have been braided and glossy, matted with brambles and disheveled; a light that seemed almost of insanity burning in her eyes; emaciated to a skeleton; her buckskin garments in tatters,—so appeared the Wat-ku-ese who now stands beside Bird-woman in history, for her story is well authenticated. But even while the traders were inviting her to stay until her swollen, bleeding feet were healed, she would glide from among them like a wraith and go forward into the gloom. Over the painful ground she struggled until there were no traders, so far it was from the country of the rising sun, and until finally she stood in the presence of the mountains. Seldom before had they been entered by one so ill fitted to endure their rigors. But Wat-ku-ese had the courage of desperation. She found her way into them and endured with a panther-

like tenacity until the baby that had kept her from insanity died. She buried it beside the trail. But Wat-ku-ese's dark day was to clear at sunset. She died of all that she had endured, but among her people, in a tepee of the camas meadow, and not alone in the mountains. Nez Perce hunters, coming into the mountains from the West, had found her ready to die and had taken her home, to the same village Lewis and Clark visited.

And according to the Indian story of today, it had been decided that safety demanded the putting to death of the mysterious beings with blue eyes and yellow hair. Rumors of the massacre which had been planned reached Wat-ku-ese. She caught a glimpse of the stranger visitors and identified them as belonging to the same race as the traders who had befriended her. Then the Nez Perces spared their lives and reverenced them.

CHAPTER IX.

Two pale-face warriors had fallen out of the sky, ready for battle. Such rumor had spread among the Indians farther down the Columbia. Braves prepared for a last resistance, and women ceased their digging of roots. For what could the appearance of the spirit warriors mean but that the end of things had drawn near? Into a terror-stricken village Captain Clark walked, creating a pitiable consternation, for who could he be but one of those mystical warriors? Sobbing, trembling mothers gathered their children close;

half-grown girls, forgetful of themselves, sought to save much-loved baby brothers and sisters by hiding them in the brush.

But Captain Clark, who knew the way to Indian hearts, moved among them like a friend, giving to each a warm handclasp and giving trinkets to the women and children. But after he had once allayed their fear he again caused consternation by lighting his pipe with a burning-glass. These timid redskins were Klikitats or Yakimas—bold and cunning in their later wars with the palefaces.

When Captain Lewis came up he might easily have been taken for the second unearthly warrior had it not been for Bird-woman and her baby. She was certainly flesh and blood. Equally so was little Baptiste; besides women and babies never traveled with war-parties. After confidence was restored the cause of their panic was explained.

In quick succession, Captain Clark had killed two birds; both of them had been shot while on the wing; Indians had seen them fall, as if from behind the clouds that stood in the sky just overhead; a mysterious sound (the gun-shot) had accompanied the fall of each. Shortly afterwards the Indians had viewed two white men. They had associated the happenings and had spread a terrifying and connected story. The birds were warriors, who had assumed their natural form upon reaching the earth, and who had been met with face to face; the rifle reports were claps of thunder; and when later Captain Clark brought down fire from

heaven to light his peacepipe the wonder story seemed confirmed.

But Indians elsewhere met them with singing and dancing and beating of tom-toms; and showed how friendly they could be by speeches, gifts, dances and feasts of dog meat.

Along the Columbia the Indian villages were numerous. Waterfowl were more abundant, and there was no more risk of the party starving.

Onward they drifted, into a country where, besides the beauty of the noble river there was the glory of the splendid solitary peaks, forever clad in ice and snow; and of streams that, not dreaming of danger, danced along atop of the giant cliffs that tower from the river's edge, until of a sudden they were at the treacherous brink, and had no time to save themselves from being hurled over—a fall they enjoyed, however, judging from the laughing and flashing with which they made the leap. For Lewis and Clark were now in the valley of the lower Columbia. Past the Cascades, Castle Rock, Multnomah, Wapatoo Island, the bold cliffs and velvet meadows of the lower river they sped, until they could hear a steady booming, more solemn and vast than that roaring away back in Montana which had led them to the Great Falls of the Missouri. They guessed it to be the roar of the ocean. The fog lifted, and beneath its wide-extended curtain they beheld the distant sea. Lewis and Clark, plain-spoken men though they were, grew almost rhapsodical when they wrote of the ocean. Bird-woman must

have felt a still greater awe as she looked upon it; for it was to her what it seemed—an endless tract of water stretching away to meet the sky. Her simplicity was such that she did not know it had an opposite shore.

But hardships that suggest those endured by the Pilgrims followed the first gladdening vision of the ocean. Such wild, fierce storms as blow in from the sea followed one another, until the canoes were partly filled with water. And when they landed they could not find a place of safety for themselves or their boats, so rock-bound had the coast become. The river water grew too salt for drinking; they had little food except raw salmon which had been spoiled by the damp. Hearing Captain Clark speak of bread, saying that he would enjoy some now better than he ever thought he would enjoy mere bread, Bird-woman, a saving, thoughtful housewife, hunted among her things and finally brought out a piece which she had cherished all the way from the Mandan towns. It was stale, of course, but she gave it to him and had the satisfaction of seeing that he relished it keenly.

When finally they landed upon a pebbly beach every one of the party was drenched, cold, hungry, and seasick as well, so violently had the canoes been tossed by the waves of the river. Their tents and wearing apparel, made of leather, were rotted by the rain, which fell ten days without ceasing.

CHAPTER X.

Finally they crossed over to the south side of the Columbia and selected the spot where they would

spend the winter; it was a grove about fifteen miles northeast of Tillamook Head, on the Netul river, which we now call the Lewis and Clark. By Christmas, seven cabins, each with a huge fireplace in one end, had sprung up in the forest, surrounded by a strong stockade.

They celebrated the day by moving in, by singing, and by dancing in the ruddy glow that the wood blaze made as if in honor of the holiday. Sacajawea had been impressed by the Christmas at Mandan; she remembered the gift-making. With a view to entering more fully into the celebration when the pleasant *tabba bone* medicine day should come again, she had secretly collected twenty-four white weasel tails, probably the black-tipped weasel, or ermine, tails so highly prized as ornaments among her own people. These she presented to Captain Clark.

The fort within speedily began to have the look of a place where people lived. Indian foods and furnishings eked out the much diminished *tabba bone* supply. So cranberries gleamed in cedar bark baskets and rush bags filled with wapatoes, camas and other edible roots stood about. Mats braided of rushes and grasses covered every floor and fur rugs were not lacking.

The fort was a beehive of industry; Captain Clark explored the country, cultivated the acquaintance of Indian chiefs, and studied the manners and customs of the natives; Captain Lewis, like another John Alden, wrote for long hours at a time, his table being a

smooth-topped cedar stump. Charboneau cooked; the men whittled evenings, cutting plates, cups, bowls, trenchers and other useful articles out of the soft cedar, and hunted during the day. Bird-woman made moccasins, many pairs, out of the elkskins they furnished.

Yet there were many long hours filled with merriment. Often when storms enraged the sea until its voice could be heard far inland, mirth reigned within the fort. And foremost amongst the merry-makers, both as entertainer and participator, was little Pomp, as Captain Clark called Bird-woman's child. Soldiers who were fathers, or uncles, or big brothers, would think of tumble-curls, roguish eyes, soft lips and bed-time romps at home as they tossed Baptiste high. And his child-mother, matronly beyond her years, would smile with pride as she watched him in their arms. And most of all was she pleased when Captain Clark would notice him specially, as he so often did. For carefully as the Captain had examined all belonging to the country west of St. Louis, he had as yet found no choicer product than this babe of the wilds, who was like his uncle, Cameahwait, as an acorn is like an oak; for he had in a sweet, childish form the activity, alertness and vigor which might make him a great warrior some day. And both from his Shoshone mother and his French father he had a love of pleasure that would have kept him awake as long as yellow candle light gleamed, the violin

sounded, the dog leaped and barked, and there were men to romp with him.

Of this volatile quality also, Captain Clark was appreciative, and a friendship, probably life-long, grew up that winter between him and little Pomp.

Bird-woman did not lack company. The women of the country visited the camp, sometimes alone, or with their children, and in groups, merely to look and wonder; to beg, or to sell cranberries, wapatoes, sallal cakes and mats and baskets. In the way of trinkets they were almost as well off as herself; for the traders had been among them and ships had landed on their coast. So they too had beads, mirrors, ribbon and bright cloth.

She returned their visits, finding her way into many a Clatsop hut, where the sign language and broken English carried forward a conversation and where she learned the secrets of their handiwork; for the Clatsop women were deft-fingered. Out of young bear grass which grew near the snow-line of great mountains they made limp, finely woven and beautifully dyed hats with broad brims and high crowns. Out of this bear grass they wove also their wonderful water-holding baskets; while silk grass, cedar bark, rushes, flags and sedge were the materials they used for commoner baskets, mats and curtains. The women also cut canoe-shaped trenchers or trays out of soft wood, in imitation of the real canoes the men made of the same soft wood.

A visit to Chief Coboway's house may be described as typical of the visits made in Clatsop homes.

Like other Coast Indians, Coboway lived quite comfortably in a house built of planks split from cedar trees, with a great fireplace in the center, and with beds or bunks built against the walls. On the floor lay mats woven of rushes, and the same kind of mats, together with strips of cedar, hung upon the walls.

Coboway's wife, a princess in her own right, that is to say, the daughter of a chief, showed Indian good breeding by giving her callers the most comfortable place in the lodge; by serving them with berries, roots and fish from neat wooden platters and with salal-berry syrup from a bowl of light-colored horn; and by showing them the baskets, mats and hats she had woven.

The boats and the skill with which they were managed could not but awaken interest. They were to the Coast Indians what horses were to the Shoshones. In them Indians ventured out upon stormy seas, mounting high waves with safety. Even as Bird-child and Prairie-flower had ridden their ponies as fearlessly as boys, so here women and girls rivaled men in management of the canoes. And as a lover of the Shoshone Indian tribe would offer ponies for the girl upon whom he had set his heart, so here he would offer a canoe, for it was his best treasure.

They were most often made of white cedar and from a single tree trunk. Their bows were high and ornamented the whole length with what Captain Clark called a comb. Occasionally a canoe was seen orna-

mented with carving and with grotesque figures of men and animals at its stem, and sometimes on the sides of the bow and stern.

One of Bird-woman's best cherished treasures was a girdle of blue beads; its beads may have been of Mandan manufacture and similar to those of blue glass which these Coast Indians possessed and valued highly; or they may have been the tiny beads of soft sky color which traders distributed and which even nowadays are so pretty when embroidered upon the doeskin. It had been admired and handled and worn among her own people in the Shining Mountains. Withered dames had let it slip slowly through their toil-worn hands in order to note each bead separately. It had delighted the eyes of children; Bird-woman's own intimate friends had worn it hours at a time, but not even to Prairie-flower had it been offered as a gift. Flatheads, Nez Perces and Columbia River tribes had cast longing eyes upon it, but she had held it securely in her own possession. But one day there came to the fort a very grandly dressed Indian. His costume included a robe of sea-otter. Upon the fur out of which this was made Captain Lewis set his heart. Likewise the Indian wanted the belt Bird-woman had on,—the treasured blue-bead girdle. Captain Lewis offered him other things, medals, commoner kinds of beads, blankets, paint, bullets, a musket, and American money. He must have the belt, or he would keep his valuable fur. So Bird-woman made the sacrifice. The otter-skin was a treasure well worth its cost, and there

was nothing in Bird-woman's manner to indicate how keenly she missed her girdle. But she had all an Indian's—a Shoshone Indian's—love of ornament. Though she had served Lewis and Clark in ways more important to them, little else had really cost her so much as giving up her girdle.

Fort Clatsop lay inland several miles from the sea. Often Sacajawea heard its roar across the impenetrable marshes westward, and longed to see the mighty bitter water.

While her own land and the land of the Mandans and Minnetarees were lying frozen and barren, green things here were lifting their heads with happy trust in the weather. But neither the abounding verdure nor the delight of the sea air could compensate for the absence of the "big water," as Indians called the ocean.

She had marveled concerning it since she had learned of it first, in conversations which went on around campfires that burned in her childhood; never had she looked at shell wampum without thinking of the big water, for from thence the shells, in the hands of traders, had mysteriously found a way. She had thought that she could gather these shells to her heart's content, not dreaming that the winter's encampment would be made miles inland.

At last came news that a whale had been stranded upon the beach. The men felt a curiosity to see it, but Bird-woman found herself left out of the party organized for the trip. She forgot her reserve almost as

completely as at the meeting with her people. In broken English Sacajawea remonstrated at being left behind, saying she had come all the way from the Mandan country thinking of the big water, and yet had never been at the shore. Now the wonderful monster lying at Ecola stimulated her curiosity still more strongly.

A day and a half of travel following the early morning start and they were at the camp of the salt-makers, where they watched the men the captains had detailed for the work make salt by boiling sea-water until it had all boiled away, leaving a layer of hard white in the bottom of each brass kettle. Then from the top of Tillamook Head they viewed the sea, more real than it had seemed during the first brief vision, but as wonderful, more wonderful even than the prairies. They climbed down and over other rocks until they found the whale. Birds of prey had feasted upon the flesh and Indians had carried off the blubber, until only the huge skeleton remained, which Bird-woman would remember as long as she remembered the ocean and her great trip.

CHAPTER XI.

The party left the sea they had traveled so far to find when the green prairies of Clatsop began to grow sweet and bright with the violets and strawberry blossoms. It was time for them to start upon their return to the United States, and when the captains had fin-

ished their work of making a map of the region they had explored, and of writing out a full description of what they had seen in the way of Indians, animals, birds, vegetation, climate, etc. Before they left, they gave the best cabin of the seven to Chief Coboway, who lived in it the rest of his life.

Up the river they worked their way, seeing everything a second time for several days. Then they were warned that if they continued their journey farther they would find themselves in a land of starvation. The parties of Indians whom they met coming out of the East, and worn to skin and bone for lack of food, gave them this warning.

Now the captains had wanted to increase their supplies in this upper country, for they had tried in vain to do so at Fort Clatsop. Finding out that there was no chance of increasing them here either, they went into camp opposite the mouth of the Sandy river, which they called the Quicksand river. Here they stayed ten days, hunting, hunting, until it seemed as if they must have meat enough to last them until they reached the Nez Perce land.

One day there came into the camp Indians who spoke of a great river, meaning the Willamette, of course, that emptied into the Columbia from the south. Lewis and Clark had seen no such river. They at once started back to find if the Indians spoke truly. Yes; there its mouth lay just as had been told them, only hidden by islands. The Indians who had swarmed in from the eastern country were here too, eager for

wapatoes. Their long-suffering women advanced boldly into the lakes in the lowlands of Wapato or Image Canoe Island, until they stood breast-deep in the chilling water. Then they dug at the bulbs with their toes, thus loosening them, when up the wapatoes would float, and be gathered and thrown into the canoes which some of the women had brought with them into the lake.

But sight-seeing and other pleasures of the trip were well nigh at an end.

Finally the party started homeward again, supposing that they had meat enough to last them. But they had not counted the length of time it would take to get past the rapids at The Dalles. Their food was gone when they reached the land of the Walla Wallas in Southeastern Washington. Here old Yellept, and less important Indians as well, made the strangers their guests and shared all they had with them. Bird-woman found a friend in a Shoshone boy who dwelt with the Walla Wallas, speaking their language and also the one she had learned in her childhood, never to forget. Through these two, Lewis and Clark and Yellept, chief of the Walla Wallas, were able to understand each other perfectly.

In return for the hospitality shown, Captain Clark did all he could to help their sick and suffering, for he had medicines, salves and surgical instruments among his supplies, and, best of all, eye-water, for sore eyes were a plague among the Indians of the Snake River plains.

Yellept proved almost as good a friend as Bird-woman's brother had proven, for in addition to his other hospitality he supplied the party with canoes when finally they left the country.

Captain Clark had not apprehended the result of his succor; but it became apparent when the number that appealed to him began to increase alarmingly. During the sojourn among the Clatsops, the story as it had first been told of white men in canoes who had been eager to reach the sea, had grown and spread until Indians in hidden lodges heard of paleface chiefs who scattered gifts broadcast, including wampum even. And now the message that they had appeared again and were healing the sick as well as scattering wampum seemed whispered about by breezes. The Indian lame, halt and blind congregated to importune, and kind-hearted Captain Clark listened and aided; so travel was delayed. But those Walla Walla and Cayuses who desired only gifts and to be dazzled by a display of wealth and finery, suffered disappointment. For Lewis and Clark were now poor. Of the presents which at Mandan had seemed countless in number, only a few, a very few, remained, and these must be hoarded on account of their purchasing power. Well had the white chiefs learned that such generosity as that shown by Cameahwait, who had given not from his abundance but from his poverty, would not be met with where there was no long-lost sister to restore. Under ordinary circumstances Indians were likely to

make them pay excessively for anything the party required.

The disappointed ones either dropped back into their haunts with total lack of interest or showed a positive disrespect; as when, for instance, Captain Lewis was eating dog meat because he had nothing better to eat, an Indian who stood by laughing in derision, finally picked up a live puppy and threw it on the Captain's plate; in a twinkling the poor puppy was hurled into the Indians' face, and Lewis threatened to cut him down with his sword, when the Siwash jester sneaked away.

But Bird-woman's loyalty never showed signs of abating. Sharpened by necessity, her naturally keen observation took in the processes by which native women among tribes heretofore unvisited, procured food from the products of the country; then she too, besides industriously pounding dry camas roots into flour, and baking the flour into flat cakes, thickened soups with meal made of sunflower seeds; made puddings of the same seeds and of marrow; and soaked them in water for a beverage. The annals of the expedition speak of the relish with which her pudding was eaten.

They finally reached the Nez Perce land; but only to find that they could not enter the mountains until the deep snow had melted from the grass which was the only food for the horses. Finally the winter did end, but with a suddenness that filled the streams with melted snow until they became roaring torrents upon

which no canoe could live. Thus it happened that they stayed at the foothills many weeks.

Here among the Nez Perces Bird-woman ceased her toil to care for her dangerously sick child; for all the gleefulness and sweet infantile activity had left little Pomp, so completely that the dullest observer must have seen he was likely soon to start alone upon a more wonderful voyage than Lewis and Clark had undertaken. The clamor of an Indian village sounded around, but the mother heard only her baby's weak little moans. The tepee in which he lay had many visitors. The dog of the expedition sought out and caressed understandingly the little friend he had guarded in early infancy and sported with until so recently. Gentle-hearted Nez Perce mothers did not withhold their sympathy, but came, bringing favorite remedies. One after another of their own simple and harmless incantations Bird-woman tried willingly and hopefully; but when they spoke of medicine men she shrank with dread; too well she knew her child could not withstand the shock of their frenized orgies. Captain Clark came often, but his habitual caresses did not cause the closed eyes to open. Yet it was in him that the mother felt the strongest hope, and great was her relief when he undertook a cure.

Of far greater importance than any ordinary pappoose—almost like the mascot of the expedition—seemed the brown baby who had come as a belated Christmas gift to Fort Mandan and speedily found a way into the hearts of Captains and soldiers alike.

But it was not wholly because of his own desire to see the little life thriving again that Captain Clark worked earnestly upon the case. Of heroic mould himself, any display of heroism was sure to win his admiration. And in his mind was a picture that would never fade. It showed wintry weather upon ice-clad mountain peaks, and a young mother who, though cold, weary and hungry, never murmured, and who managed to keep her child comfortable as he would have been in a tepee of the plains while she toiled along a hazardous, painful path, in the face of merciless storms. Such a woman well merited the friend that Captain Clark proved. Reducing the strength of his medicines until they were not too powerful for the wee patient, he administered them; and health flowed back as it had ebbed away, until, when the time at last came for entering the mountains, no member of the party was in better trim than little Pomp.

As a final expression of the friendliness they had been manifesting, the Nez Perces set fire to the forests just before the departure of their guests, explaining that the rite would insure a successful journey through the mountains. The consuming flames fed themselves voraciously, and leaped skyward in streaming banners, illuminating until even the dull empty tepees glowed; the light revealed a gravity in each dusky face, for the ceremony of setting the forests afire was akin to worship. So ended a visit of which the Nez Perces tell to this day.

CHAPTER XII.

Old Toby, the guide whom Bird-woman's brother had chosen, had considered his errand accomplished when he had escorted the *tabba bone* to a view of the western plains. He had then deserted. So Bird-woman would now be sole guide. Their previous experience in the mountains seemed to have availed little other than as a warning of how easily the comparatively safe trails might be missed, and how hopelessly lost the expedition might become in an endless maze of peaks and canyons and forests.

Of the best blood of a superior though obscure tribe, the Indian girl fulfilled the obligations of her birth; Lewis and Clark had grown to know her well and as a result they were willing to let her lead as if they had themselves been blind.

After crossing the Bitter Root Mountains, the party separated, Bird-woman remaining with Captain Clark's division, which was to go straight to the valley that had been her childhood home; from thence they would go on to the Yellowstone River at its nearest point to the three forks of the Missouri. The first thing was to find a way into the Rocky Mountains. She did this for them, choosing a gap that led to the Bighole or Wisdom River. Here Captain Clark and his men were for a moment dismayed; for they saw no further trace of Indian trails. But the leader had no doubt herself, and thus filled the men with confidence. On she went, cheering them by telling them how she

knew the region; how, often and often in her childhood, she had been here with her people, who came to gather the round sweet camas root and to trap the beaver.

They had left canoes and other things at a point on the Jefferson River, but probably never could themselves have found them. True to her promise, Bird-woman led them straight to the cache, as such a hiding-place was called.

They came to a place where the roads, or trails rather, instead of losing themselves as before, were not only more numerous but all led to the same gap in the mountains; so it must have seemed that this gap was the safest one to enter. But she said no; to go further south; which they did, and were not sorry, for it brought them to a summit from the top of which they looked down over lesser peaks upon a plain which they heard with joy was crossed by the Indian road Bird-woman had been telling them about, the buffalo trail that led from the present Logan and Bozeman in Montana, to the site of the prsent city of Helena. "The remarkable little woman never failed to rise to the occasion even when it was mountain high," writes Elliott Coues with reference to this incident.

There is not much else to tell of Bird-woman. We do not even know whether she stopped at the home of her childhood for another visit and to get the little nephew she had claimed as her own upon finding its mother dead.

The party drifted down the Yellowstone without further adventure except that they heard rumblings and spoutings which they could not understand, although Bird-woman tried to explain that they were near the land of the evil spirit. What she and other Indians thought to be the land of the evil spirit was the present Yellowstone Park, which Lewis and Clark passed but did not discover.

They re-entered the Mandan village upon an August day. Lewis and Clark knew that Indians were quite as likely to be emotional as to be stoical; hence they were not surprised at the ecstasy of joy with which the Mandans received them. Bird-woman, the Shoshone, was welcomed as a sister might have been; Baptiste received his full meed of attention. This sturdy toddler had been carried away upon a cradle board while yet too young and helpless for the cozy pouch that his mother's robe had afterwards been folded to contain, and from which he had seen so much of the big world.

Even in the midst of the excitement of the home-coming, Lewis and Clark began preparations for departure. Women and children sobbed as their boats moved away; for two Mandan families were aboard. The Charboneaus had been invited to go to the pale-face country; but Toussaint had winced at the mere suggestion of his living among the whites. And well as Bird-woman liked the *tabba bone* and appreciated the opportunity of learning their ways, she had no desire to re-enter the narrow canoes, but felt willing and even

glad to slip back to her old place in the Mandan village life.

But she had seen a glimmer. No sooner had the fatigue of travel worn away than she would have relived the experiences beginning with the first coming to Fort Mandan of the white chiefs and their braves. Unrest filled the place of the old homesickness; but it was eased by a hope that centered mostly in Baby Baptiste. Through the haze of the years she saw him, true to his Indian blood, yet knowing the language and ways of white men; for had not Captain Clark, great among his own people and trusted by Indians, hinted that he would like to see little Pomp given all the advantages of a white child? For the better understanding of the mother he had resolved white man's years into Indian seasons. Four times must snow cover the prairies, four times must corn ripen before he would be old enough to begin learning the meaning of the mystical black marks upon white paper. And soon after his departure from Mandan, came a letter from him. It said:

"As to your little son, my boy Pomp, you well know my fondness for him and my anxiety to take and raise him as my own child. I once more tell you if you will bring your son Baptiste to me I will take him and treat him as my own child. * * * * * * Wishing you and your family great success and with anxious expectation of seeing my little dancing boy Baptiste, I shall remain your friend,

WM. CLARK."

But though full of hope in her son and his future, she felt all the pain of a mother at the prospect of giving up her child. She mothered him fervently during the fleeting four years; carefully she taught him, adding to the simple lore of Indian childhood the white man's "yes" and "no," "please" and "thank you." Too young to see the sadness in his mother's eyes, the child was happy. The first he knew of sorrow was when one night he went to bed, not upon a couch of skins, in the cheer of a lodge fire, and to be soothed to sleep by his mother's crooning, but in a bed so white that it seemed like snow.

For the long trip down the river and toward the rising sun had been made; Charboneau, Sacajawea and Baptiste were at last in St. Louis. Bird-woman had not thought to be known by any except those who had been upon the great expedition; but the story of the journey to the western ocean, through which her own story ran as a separate thread, had become familiar at St. Louis firesides. Told with directness by men whose hearts of oak were yet strongly sympathetic, to a people whose own experiences upon the frontier had given them understanding of such trials as Bird-woman had endured, the story had created a liking for her. So she had gone into a friendly atmosphere.

St. Louis had seemed at first but a strange confusion of sights and sounds. This confusion vanished when they found Captain Clark, who was as hearty and reassuring as ever, though greatly changed in appearance, for he was no longer bearded, he no longer

wore buckskin garments, and his complexion had grown fair. He knew the Indian quarter well and helped the Indian family to settle where they would feel most at home.

From thence Bird-woman, venturesome as ever, sallied forth to see the pale-face world. Captain Clark's wife, who was young and beautiful, and many other ladies, wished to see the dusky woman who was so well entitled to a share of the glory with which the heroes of the great expedition had been crowned. So she went into pale-face lodges that were wonderfully divided into compartments and wonderfully furnished, with curtains like sea foam, such weaving as no Indian had ever accomplished, and such woodenwork as few of them had ever seen. And in these lodges dwelt women with hair like the silk of the maize, eyes as blue as the sea, and cheeks like wild rose petals. They were attired in fabrics as softly flowing as the tall prairie grass, and among them moved women of York's race, black as coal and wearing upon their heads handkerchiefs as red as living embers.

Baptiste felt as much at home in these boudoirs as any small pet creature they possessed. His deep, dark eyes won the admiration of the ladies. Renewal of acquaintance with the friends of his babyhood was for him encouragement to let loose all his gaiety. He romped with the flossy-haired lap-dogs, and but for his mother's restraint would have opened small gilt doors that held canaries in their cages, and upset work-baskets, making a tangle of bright-colored thread.

Bird-woman herself might have felt strangely out of place had her wee son given her a chance to be self-conscious.

Then Bird-woman saw much of still another kind of women. They wore always the same flowing black, their faces were gentle and their hands were always busy. They were the nuns with whom Baptiste would finally be left. She visited them in their convent and caught from them an ideal of orderliness. Thus the days passed, but at the end of a year the Charboneaus left St. Louis for the Dakota land. Then it was that Baptiste found himself alone with the nuns.

It is easy to believe that giving him up made the crowning sacrifice of his mother's life; she must have felt many misgivings. Could the gentlest nun of them all soothe his grief for her absence? It was his birthright to be free as a cloud. Would he thrive in captivity? She remembered how heavily shoes clattered upon the wooden floors of the convent, and how bells clanged through its halls. Her heart bade her take the child with her back to where corn rustled and moccasins pattered soft upon the turf. But good judgment directed otherwise.

Hezekiah Butterworth writes as follows in reference to Golden-heart, another Indian heroine, "one of those forest sibyls, or wise women, who were found in nearly every tribe, who became famous through native

clearness of vision and aptness of speech. Such women are among the most interesting studies in Indian history, their native gifts resembling the pastoral prophetesses of early Eastern countries."

Such a woman was Sacajawea. She had seen that mystical flower, white-man's-foot, bud upon Indian soil, and she foresaw that her son would need the education Captain Clark offered.

In 1811, an English traveler dared the American Northwest. He left a record of his experiences, which mentions meeting a Frenchman and his Indian wife, both of whom had been to the Pacific with Lewis and Clark. They were ascending the river from St. Louis. The man talked freely. The woman said little, yet it was of her also that Bradbury wrote, mentioning that in her dress and manner she imitated the ladies of St. Louis; and speaking of her apparent goodness and gentleness. But he wrote down also that she seemed a chronic invalid. So the trip to the Western ocean had not benefited her health to the extent of making her robust.

Henceforward the Charboneaus were wealthy, as riches were measured in the quiet Mandan village. Before his own departure from Mandan Captain Clark had paid them $500, and he now made Touissaint Indian agent, which position he held for thirty years. Baptiste did not disappoint his generous patron in his

plans for his schooling. The author of "The Conquest" has seen an account of the cost of his books, clothing, etc., when he was a student at St. Louis under the guardianship of Clark, in 1820. So it would seem that he spent the years of his childhood and early youth in school.

Thus the civilization that she welcomed had burdened her with a sorrow peculiarly its own, for however hard the lot of the Indian mother, her children grew up in her sight. We do not know whether Bird-woman sank into an early grave on account of her invalidism, or whether she lived to welcome back her son with his white man's learning, nor what vicissitudes she endured before finally her burial fires were kindled. But the name Charboneau is remembered in Dakota, and Baptiste Charboneau, her son, revisited in his manhood the Nez Perce land, and hunted and trapped in the big mountains in the neighborhood of the Three Tetons.

The dusky child-wife should be endeared to us if only because of her love of the land we love today.

Our cities and villages arise where once were her hills, prairies and valleys. For a century an eager, restless people have been transforming that lovely wild country; but at the end of the hundredth year they pause for a backward look. The ancient woods rise again and are thronged with creatures innumerable; buffalo rove the prairies; the original Indians roam

and hunt and war again among the forests and mountains; and from out the dusky throng the Bird-woman of Lewis and Clark is chosen to be remembered permanently; for her fame will outlive the centennial celebration that awakened our interest in her. As long as the story of the Northwest lives it will tell of the true service of an Indian girl, and of the love of land and kindred, the loyalty, heroism and ambition that were a part of her wild nature.

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